

Don't wait for the water: County encourages residents to take flood prevention measures

Floods can wreak havoc on homes, causing extensive damage to infrastructure and personal belongings and posing significant risks to safety. With the arrival of spring, Dufferin County is reminding residents about the flood prevention measures they can take to protect their homes and families.

"Flooding is the most common natural disaster in Canada and floods can happen anywhere, at any time of year, to anyone," said Steven Murphy, manager of 911 and preparedness for Dufferin County.

"A changing climate brings more frequent and intense rainfall events, elevating the risk of flooding in our region," adds Sara MacRae, manager of climate and energy for Dufferin County. "By knowing the risks and taking steps to prepare, residents can minimize damage, protect their belongings and ensure the safety of their families."

Prevent a flood

The average basement flood costs \$43,000 to repair. But home protection is easier than you think and you can take basic flood prevention measures for any budget:

\$0 Maintain what you have at least twice per year. Remove debris inside and outside your home, test your sump pump, ensure you have a battery back-up and maintain your backwater valve.

Under \$250 By tackling some do-it-yourself projects, you can complete simple updates to your home to keep it safe. Install window well covers, disconnect and extend downspouts, install a flood alarm and install a rain barrel.

Over \$250 A contractor can help you with some larger or more complex projects that will help you lower your flood risk. Install window wells, correct grading, install a backwater valve, install backup sump pump power source and consider replacing traditional grass lawn with a rain garden.

Prepare for a flood

Even with flood prevention measures in place, you should be ready and able to respond quickly during a flood event. There are easy steps you can take to ensure you are ready for potential flooding:

Ask your insurance provider about water damage coverage. In many cases, flood damage is not covered by insurance. Speak with your broker and review your insurance policy carefully.

Store your valuables and hazardous materials in watertight containers. Heating fuel like bulk propane or oil should be secured. Gas cans should be stored low, on the ground and in an outbuilding.

Make and practice a family emergency plan so that everyone knows what to do and where to go in case of a flooding emergency.

Prepare an emergency kit so that you and your family are self-sufficient for at least 72 hours.

Dufferin County will speak with residents at the Orangeville Lions Home and Garden Show April 5 to 7 about the increasing risks associated with floods, the importance of flood safety and how you can best prepare for possible flooding.

"We encourage Dufferin residents to come out and visit us to learn more about the easy steps they can take to keep themselves, their families, and their homes safe this spring and all year round from flooding," says Steven.

For more information and to access valuable flood protection resources, visit www.dufferincounty.ca/floodprotection.